



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

I am human...so I have to admit I have really enjoyed hearing the very nice things that many of you have had to say about the new format and new name for our monthly publication. I join with you in complimenting Grace Atchley and Stuart McCollough for the excellent work they have done on the concept and design of The Mid-South Baptist. Your affirmation encourages all of us to continually improve our print, electronic and personal communication of what is happening among the churches of the Mid-South Baptist Association. Please keep on talking to us about how we can improve communication and more effectively tell the stories of what God is doing in His churches.

I am grateful...for the way our churches are responding to significant changes that are occurring in the Mid-South Baptist Association. The approval of the new Constitution and Bylaws at our semi-annual meeting in May replaced our long-standing committee and subcommittee structure with an Administrative Council and four strategy teams focused on encouraging and assisting the churches in the work and ministry God has called them to do. Over the next few weeks, our 2007 Nominating Team will be asking many of you to consider serving as a member of one of those strategy teams in the coming year. Our associational leadership teams are praying and believing that God will fill-up those strategy teams with leaders who will seek and follow God's direction in developing church-based strategies that equip and enable our churches to share the gospel and make disciples locally and globally. I would love to hear from you if you have an interest in serving on a strategy development team in the coming year!

I am encouraged...that God is growing us into a "different kind" of Baptist association. We are becoming an association that provides encouragement and resources that support the ministries of the churches. We are becoming an association of churches that network with one another in small groups and large groups to develop strategies for reaching our cities and the world with the message of the Gospel. We are becoming an association of churches that partner with one another to start new churches, develop leaders, and mobilize their members for mission service. It is encouraging to see how God is growing us! An important part of the process of "becoming" is to determine the resources our churches need, as well as the resources that are available to support the work of the churches. We have opportunity to take a strong step in that direction in the very near future. On August 14 and 15, church consultants enlisted by the North American Mission Board will have opportunity to meet and talk with Pastors of our churches. The private, one-hour interviews will focus on God's vision for your church, the successes God is giving, the challenges you face, and the resources you need to fulfill the mission God has given you. As a result of this assessment process, we will have a clearer picture of the work, ministry, needs and challenges of our churches. A few weeks after the interview sessions, associational leaders will have opportunity to meet with a variety of Baptist entities that will identify resources they will make available to assist churches in fulfilling God's mission and vision. We believe God has provided this opportunity and that the end result will be additional support for that the end result will be additional support for churches engaged in the Great Commission! So, I want to invite every Pastor to personally participate, or to enlist a representative who can participate, in the interview session. Call us at 373-6161 or email michaeld@msbac.org to set an appointment time.

I have...one more thing to say. While I am very optimistic about this opportunity, and confident that it is a tremendous step toward becoming the kind of association God is growing us to be, I am also very confident that WE can conceive no plan, approach or system that will substitute for an absolute outpouring of God's grace, mercy and direction for the churches of our association. Yes, we should do all that we can do to encourage the effective ministry of our churches, but WE MUST pray without ceasing that God will equip and empower His church to fulfill His Great Commission! TO GOD BE THE GLORY!

Bro. Mike